



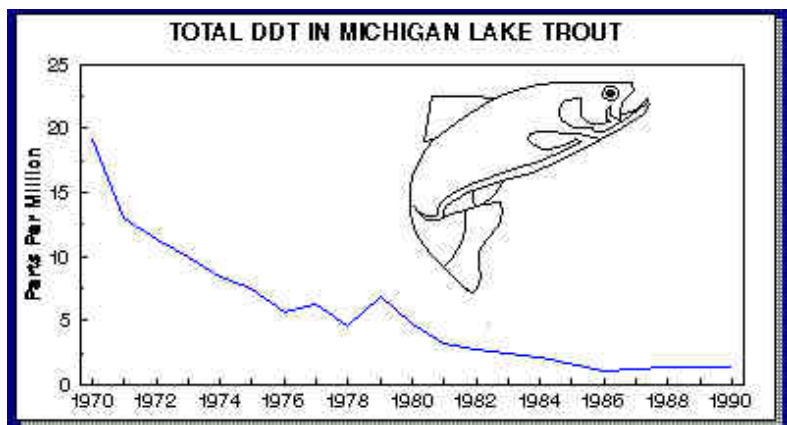
REDUCING ECOLOGICAL THREATS THROUGH PESTICIDE CONTROL

S.C.Delaney/U.S.EPA

EPA's pesticide regulatory programs have played a key role in helping restore some of the nation's most precious wildlife. A prominent example involves the Agency's 1972 ban of DDT, a common pesticide known to build up in the ecological food chain and reduce the ability of both birds and fish to reproduce. While a variety of factors (e.g., habitat loss) played a role in the decline of these species, the recovery in the wake of the DDT ban clearly demonstrates the importance of pesticide control.

Perhaps the best example of how the DDT ban helped a species rebound is that of the American bald eagle -- our national symbol. The bald eagle was removed from the endangered species list in July 1995 after nearly disappearing 25 years ago. Bald eagle populations across the country have risen. For example, the number of successful nestings around Lake Ontario has increased from none in 1979 to six in 1994; over 60 eaglets were raised in these nests.

The DDT ban has also brought about the recovery of a variety of other species. Federal officials are currently in the process of removing several bird species, including the peregrine falcon and the bald pelican, from the endangered/threatened list. The ecological effects of eliminating DDT use are also evident in Great Lakes fish. For example, average DDT concentrations in Lake Michigan lake trout declined from 19.19 parts per million in 1970 to 1.39 parts per million in 1990.



While banning DDT may be the most dramatic and well-known example, EPA's work to protect endangered species and other wildlife has continued and grown increasingly more sophisticated. Before a pesticide can be registered or reregistered, EPA requires data and information on its environmental fate and potential effect on birds, fish and other organisms.

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